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ABSTRACT

This guide presents ideas for dealing with women in nontraditional jobs for managers who work with young, entry-level workers in small businesses. The guide is designed to help managers (1) develop strategies to help them deal with workers' attitudes toward women in nontraditional jobs; (2) reduce adjustment problems; (3) build a cooperative, productive team of workers; and (4) solve problems of sex discrimination. The guide uses case studies to illustrate the techniques and ideas that are discussed. Key points are summarized at the end of the booklet, and a review quiz with answers is provided. A list of suggested resources completes the guide. (KC)

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Why Not Me?

Women in Non-Traditional Jobs

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Why Not Me?

Women in Non-Traditional Jobs

the WorkForce series for small businesses

The National Child Labor Committee
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3

This guide was created by the National Child Labor Committee in cooperation with the Colorado Alliance for Business, the New York Private Industry Council, and the Hartford Area Private Industry Council under grants from the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, the Ford Foundation, Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York, Avon Products, and the New York Community Trust.

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What This Guide Will Help You Do More Effectively

- Develop strategies to help you deal with workers' attitudes toward women in non-traditional jobs.
- Reduce adjustment problems.
- Build a cooperative, productive team of workers.
- Solve problems of sex discrimination.

CASE STUDY

Not What I Had In Mind

Anna Berman needed help. She ran a small secretarial and messenger service for a law building near City Hall. In the last few months, several small firms who did not have staff secretaries had opened and so Anna had found that although business was wonderful, she and her staff of fifteen secretaries had become very overloaded. She decided to hire two new typists whom she would train as legal secretaries.

Anna knew just what kind of person she wanted: a young woman who had just graduated from high school, who had had enough secretarial courses to be a good basic typist, and who wanted to learn. She had hired several very reliable trainees from a local high school in the past, so called the typing teacher and asked for the names of a couple of recent graduates.

Anna hired the first young woman she interviewed immediately. She was lively, a good typist, and eager to learn how to be a legal secretary. The second person Anna interviewed was Bob Marxsen, a young man who had also been referred with excellent recommendations from the typing teacher.

Bob was very bright and was a good typist. He said that he wanted to be a legal secretary and impressed Anna as someone who would be dependable. She said to him, "I'm sure you would do a good job, but I'm afraid you wouldn't fit in very well. All of the secretaries here are women and I have found them to be the most reliable in the past. I'm afraid you will be bored by this job before long and then leave as soon as you are trained."

"I really want to be a secretary," said Bob. "It's a terrific job and I think I will find it interesting. I got along well with the women in my classes, and I think that I will get along well with the people who work here too."

"I don't know," said Anna, "You just aren't what I had in mind."

Most of the time when employers think about jobs, they think about the people who have held the positions and not the position itself. That isn't unusual: Rose and Danny and Inez are all more memorable than the collection of tasks they perform. The problem with that kind of mental shorthand comes when you begin hiring someone to do the job, because certain qualities of the individual become institutionalized in your mind as job qualifications. One of those qualities is gender: the job is seen not as "dishwasher," but as "a man who washes the dishes." Like Anna Berman, employers then look not for typists, but for reliable young women who will be typists.

When employers set out to hire new people, their primary concern is to get the best person for the job. No one really starts out with an eye toward excluding anyone willfully. But in trying to find the right person, a lot of people *do* get excluded — and a lot of them are women who just aren't quite right for the job because in the back of the employer's mind is the job description that says a dishwasher is a man who washes dishes.

Anna Berman had reservations about hiring Bob as a typist and secretarial trainee because she had always assumed that secretaries are women. Most secretaries *are* women, but being a woman is not a necessary qualification for being a secretary.

Anna relied on assumptions about what men and women want from work to decide that Bob might not be right for the job. She wasn't able, because of her upbringing and experience, to get past Bob's gender to see him as an individual who was qualified to do the job and *wanted* to do it. Anna lost the chance to hire a bright, eager, willing worker she really needed because she didn't stop to think about *why* she had reservations — and that decision is going to cost her money.

Anna is going to have to lose the productivity of a good worker while she looks for a woman to do the job that Bob could have done. She is going to have to invest a lot of her time to recruit and interview another worker. And she always runs the risk of not finding someone who is as eager and qualified as Bob is. Further, she is spending that time at a point where her staff is already overworked. A delay in hiring a new person can only make morale worse.

The real question for Anna is this: was the gender of the worker important enough to spend this much time, aggravation, and money looking for someone else?

CASE STUDY

Very Secure

Renee Kohler applied for a job as a security guard trainee with a jewelry importer. Jerry Newman, the owner, was worried about hiring a woman for the job because he was afraid she would be more likely to get hurt on the job if there was trouble. Despite his reservations, he decided to take a chance on Renee because he liked her manner and thought she would learn quickly.

Renee had been on the job for two days when the three other security guards approached Jerry. "Jerry," said one, "I think we may have a problem with Renee. For one thing she's really young for this type of work. For another, we're worried she might get hurt on the job. We just don't think a woman can defend herself as well as a man."

"I thought about that too, but I wanted to give her a chance. Let's give her some time and see how she handles herself," replied Jerry.

Another of the guards spoke up, "Listen, Jerry, this is going to put a strain on the rest of us. Now we have to watch out for her too. It makes us more vulnerable to have a woman."

Jerry said, "We don't know if that's true. Let's just give her a chance and see how she works out."

After Renee had been on the job for six months, she and Jerry met for her performance evaluation. "You know, Renee," Jerry told her, "we were all a little apprehensive at first about having a woman in this job. We were afraid that you might get hurt or that you might not be able to handle yourself in a pinch, but I must say that we're very pleased with the way you've worked out. You're doing an excellent job."

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Jerry was reluctant to hire Renee because all of the other security guards were men and Renee was a woman. At first glance, it would seem that hiring Renee was the source of the problem with the other workers. But a closer look at the case reveals another source.

The problem was *not* Renee, but the other workers' *expectations* about Renee. The other security guards assumed that there would be problems because Renee did not fit their idea of what a security guard was. The problem was not so much having a woman in a job traditionally held by a man, but the anticipation that there would naturally be problems because the gender of the worker had changed.

Expectations can become a self-fulfilling prophecy: if you expect trouble, you will usually get it. However, if, like Jerry, you can wait and see, you will probably be pleasantly surprised. Jerry's success in holding off until Renee had a chance to prove herself made an uncertain situation work out well.

Most employers find that hiring a woman for a job usually held by a man doesn't cause any special problems. In fact, considering men and women for jobs without regard to their gender has an unexpected benefit: you have a much larger pool of potential employees from which to choose. Finding the right person for the job is always difficult. To the extent that you open the job to more applicants, you have a better chance of finding the person who has precisely the qualifications you are looking for.

Women and Work

Feelings about the kind of work that is appropriate for men and for women run very deep in our culture. All of us were raised with the idea that there was "women's work" and "men's work," and that things ran smoothly when people did what they were expected to do. But that kind of thinking is a luxury we can no longer afford: women are the financial mainstay of many families and the nation's businesses need women's expertise.

A hundred years ago, women were judged by a yardstick that measured their piety, their housekeeping, their chastity and their submissiveness. If a woman worked outside the home at all, she was confined to jobs that involved the same skills. But today if women were confined to those jobs, the American economy would stop: there are not enough men in the nation to replace all of the country's employed women.

During World War II the country learned that women were good ship builders, truck drivers, and assembly line workers because women replaced men who had entered the military in thousands of defense industries. It was only through the work of these women — all of the "Rosie the Riveters" — that America was able to produce the goods and services necessary to support the war effort.

Women are an essential part of the economy today too. Today the majority of the country's women will work for most of their lives. Young women who are making career decisions now look, as do young men, for jobs in which they can spend their lives. Increasingly young women see interesting jobs and ask, "Why not me?"

CASE STUDY

Be A Cashier

Janice Goldman applied for a job as a forklift operator in the warehouse of a carpet company.

Jake Smith, the manager, looked over her application and liked what he saw. Then, looking up at Janice, he said, "Janice, I'm really sorry. I'd like to hire you, but this job requires a man. In addition to operating the fork lift, this job involves lifting heavy rolls of carpets. Besides, all the warehouse workers are men, and we've always had a man operate the fork lift. I would like to have you work for us though. We have an opening as a cashier coming up in a few days. It doesn't pay quite as much but I'm sure you'd like it better."

Janice rose from the chair and replied, "And I'm sure I wouldn't like it, Mr. Smith. Thank you for your time."

She walked out, leaving Jake looking after her with a puzzled expression on his face.

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Jake probably didn't realize it, but he was thinking in sexual stereotypes. He assumed that the job needed to be done by a man because a man had always done it in the past. He steered Janice toward another job which he believed was more appropriate for a woman.

Jake never attempted to find out whether Janice was qualified to do the job. He didn't check to see if she knew the proper body mechanics for lifting or if she could lift one of the carpet rolls or if she knew how to operate a fork lift. All of those questions are an important part of deciding whether Janice was qualified. They were questions Jake would have routinely asked a male applicant. However, this time Jake's assumption got in the way of his main goal, which was to find a good fork lift operator. Because it did, he not only failed to find the operator, but left Janice with a very bad impression of his company too.

In all probability, Jake thought he was being kind to Janice by offering her a better job. However, the job paid less than the one for which she applied. How much of a favor is that to Janice?

Under the law, "why not me" is a fair question for any applicant to ask. The answer, "because you are a woman," is no longer acceptable.

Equal employment opportunity is the law.

Equal employment opportunity is the right of all people to work and to advance on the job on the basis of merit, ability, and potential, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against groups of people such as blacks, Jews, and women.

If you immediately dismiss the idea of hiring a young woman for a job that has usually been held by a man, you are probably violating the law. Title VII applies to companies with fifteen or more employees. Some state laws, however, are stricter, and the stricter law usually applies. Laws vary significantly from place to place. To find out what the equal employment opportunity law is in your state, call the local office of your state employment service or your state's Fair Employment Practices Commission.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces Title VII and has issued "Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex." These regulations bar hiring based on stereotypes of the sexes. They prohibit classifying and advertising jobs as "male" and "female." They also provide that "protective" state laws which prohibit or limit employment of women in certain occupations, during certain hours, or for certain periods before or after childbirth are not permitted.

The law also mandates equal pay for equal work in the Equal Pay Act of 1963. That means that everyone who has the same responsibilities should be paid the same thing. Everyone doing the same job must be paid on the same basis too: if you pay men by the hour with extra pay for overtime, you cannot pay women salaries with no overtime pay. Benefits must, under the law, also be given equally to men and women.

The law clearly gives women the right to be considered for jobs on an equal basis with men. Women do not need protection or special considerations, they need jobs with equal pay.

Whether or not to hire a woman is no longer a question for most employers. The debate is over.

CASE STUDY

Slow Poke

Caroline McVey worked as an apprentice for a maintenance company that specialized in plumbing, electrical, and carpentry repairs for businesses.

She had been on the job for several months when she found out that a young man hired at the same time and doing the same work was being paid one dollar an hour more than she was.

She went to her supervisor to complain about the difference in pay. He told her, "I pay you less because you work slower than the men."

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Speed is not a basis of pay on this job. This employer is clearly violating the law with respect to equal pay. If pay was based on piece work or on the rate of production, *all* workers must be paid that way and it must be spelled out during the job interview. Terms of pay can't be changed to conform to a worker's supposed rate of productivity. If a worker is not productive enough, the proper response is training, not a pay cut.

Do You Agree?

1. **Women do better at office work because the job suits their temperament.**

   Yes No

2. **Most women are physically unable to lift objects that weigh fifty pounds or more because they are usually small and don't have powerful muscles.**

   Yes No

3. **Many jobs involve getting dirty, grubby, or greasy, and that turns women off.**

   Yes No

4. **Men should be assigned tasks that require physical strength while women should be assigned tasks that require attention to detail.**

   Yes No

5. **Women don't feel comfortable working with men.**

   Yes No

6. **When a man and a woman both apply for the same job, and they are equally qualified, preference should be given to the man because he probably has a family to support.**

   Yes No

7. **Women never know what they want. They keep changing their minds.**

   Yes No

8. **Too many adjustments must be made in the work place to accommodate women on the staff.**

   Yes No

9. **Women with children are a bad risk because if the child becomes ill, she is the one who must leave work or be absent to care for the child.**

   Yes No

10. **Women who go to work take jobs away from men who need them to support their families.**

    Yes No

11. **You shouldn't hire a single woman because she will get married and leave. You shouldn't hire a married woman because she will get pregnant and leave.**

    Yes No

Attitude Survey Analysis

If you answered "no" to all the questions on the attitude survey you are a person who has little or no bias regarding sex. If you answered "yes" to any of the questions, however, you are accepting some myths about women that just aren't true. Here is another way to think about these ideas:

1. Women don't necessarily do better at office work than men. Office skills are learned, not inherited. Temperament is not the issue.

2. Most women can and *do* lift fifty pounds or more of laundry, children, groceries, or furniture. Lifting is a matter of conditioning the body, not of build or strength. Lifting requires leverage, not muscle.

3. Getting dirty, grubby, or greasy is part of a particular job. Not many people start out saying, "I want to work in a job where I will get really messy." This aspect of a job probably turns everyone off.

4. Physical strength is not a matter of being male or female, but of conditioning the body. The same can be said for attention to detail — some men are detail-oriented and some women are not.

5. Most women can be comfortable working with men when there is mutual respect among co-workers. Women attend co-ed classes, meet with men socially, and relate to men on many levels already, so why expect a special problem at work?

6. Preference in hiring should be given to the person who can do the job. A significant proportion of women workers maintained families according to the U.S. Labor Department. When you make a decision to hire one man rather than another, you do not consider who has more bills to pay. Why consider that in deciding which woman to hire?

7. Women are people—some know what they want and others don't. Men as well as women change their minds — especially when they are young.

8. Women as a group don't require any special adjustments. A period of adjustment on the job is to be expected for everyone.

9. Women with children are often married to men with the same children. The father is just as capable of caring for a sick child as the mother. And in most cases, the person who tends the child while the parent or parents work can handle the situation.

10. The U.S. Department of Labor states that there were 19.8 million women in the labor force in March, 1973. The number of unemployed men was 2.5 million. If all the married women stayed home and unemployed men were placed in their jobs, there would still be 17.3 million unfilled jobs.

11. A declining number of women leave work for marriage and children. Among those who do leave, a majority return to the work force when their children begin school.

CASE STUDY

The Way It Is

Dondra Sims was hired by an accounting firm as an office assistant. During the interview, the office manager, Melanie Ford, explained the job: "You'll be doing messenger work, helping accountants move into new offices, unpacking and moving old files into storage. If you can't type, we'll see to it that you learn. We want you to be able to do everything around the office."

During her first week of work, Dondra was helping the other pages move an accountant into an office. Melanie noticed Dondra carrying a carton and told her, "Dondra, I don't want you lifting. The men can do that. You can start unpacking instead."

One of the men piped up, "That's not fair! These boxes aren't that heavy. She can do it."

Melanie replied firmly, "I don't want her lifting. That's just the way it is."

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

That's the way it *shouldn't* be. Dondra is capable of doing the job with all that it entails, including lifting. If she isn't able to lift, then she shouldn't have been hired because lifting is part of her job.

This kind of protectiveness is a form of discrimination. It is also illegal. "Protecting" women perpetuates the idea that women are frail little girls who should be shielded. That isn't fair to the men who have to take over the work the woman is being prevented from doing.

Melanie would get the job done faster and would improve morale if she would give Dondra a chance to do the work she was hired to do.

Young People In Non-Traditional Jobs

Young women (and men) who apply for non-traditional jobs are usually highly motivated. Because they are often discouraged from seeking jobs which are usually reserved for one sex, you can bet that they have a firm commitment to doing well if they persist long enough to get an application in at your company. That kind of motivation is a powerful argument for hiring that applicant because success at work depends more on the will to succeed than on any other single factor.

Any new employee requires a period of adjustment before he or she becomes a member of the work team. That is true when a young woman takes a job which is usually held by a man too. If you prepare for that, the chances are that things will go well. Some workers may be nonplussed to see a woman performing a job which is usually done by a man, but if you make a point to welcome the young woman to the job, most of the workers will follow your example.

Let other workers know in advance that a young woman will be taking the new job. Let them know that she is willing and capable of doing the job and that you are confident she will be an asset to the company. Your attitude will set the tone for the entire crew: if you show confidence in the new worker and make it clear that she will succeed, the other workers will follow your example.

Once the young woman begins working, make a point to introduce her to her co-workers and to make sure that she feels welcome. The first day on the job is awkward for anyone, but for a young woman who may be the only woman on the crew, things are bound to be uncomfortable until people get to know one another a little. That is a temporary problem that will pass as soon as she learns to do the job. If you try to put her at ease and extend to her the same friendly courtesy you give all workers, the awkwardness will pass quickly and everyone can get down to getting the job done.

Explain the ground rules of your company and let the new worker know what to expect on the job. Be specific and clear about hours of work, safety rules, protective clothing, and the use of equipment.

Describe the purpose of the job, including the worker's specific responsibilities. Define your role as supervisor. Tell her that you act as a trainer to help workers learn and improve their work; as an evaluator to ensure that the work quality is up to par; and a manager to see that ground rules are followed.

Doing these things will help acclimate the young woman to her job and to your company. Taking this time at the beginning will save you time — and money — in the long run. (Further information on orienting new workers can be found in *Starting Up: A Guide to Breaking In the New Worker.)*

CASE STUDY

No Lunch

Ellen Miller hired Jerry Washington as a general office worker for a real estate company. He was the first young man Ellen had hired for the job. She assigned him to work with two women, Carmen and Sandra, who had worked there for some time. Ellen had a lot of confidence in Jerry, who had good clerical skills and was eager to learn about real estate.

Jerry learned the job quickly and turned in consistently good work. However, Ellen noticed that he seemed isolated from Carmen and Sandra. He always ate lunch alone and when staff meetings were held, he never contributed to the discussion of the clerical work assignments.

Ellen called Jerry into her office to talk about the problem. "Jerry," she said, "You do a very good job but you need to make a bigger effort to be a part of the office. You never talk to Sandra and Carmen and you always seem to eat lunch alone. You don't even participate in the conversations that go on at break times. Being friendly is part of the job too. Don't you like Carmen and Sandra?"

"Sandra and Carmen don't like me," returned Jerry. "They won't talk to me and they won't eat lunch with me. I don't care. I don't like this job anyway. I want to work in a place where people are nicer."

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The source of the problem is not Jerry, but Carmen and Sandra's reaction to Jerry. They were not used to working with a man in the job and so did not extend to him the friendliness that they probably would have to a young woman. Instead of dealing with their feelings about the new situation, they ignored them — and ignored Jerry. The real source of the problem is not so much the personalities involved, but the workers' assumptions about the kind of work which is appropriate for men and for women.

Ellen could have prevented the problem in the first place if she had talked with Carmen and Sandra before Jerry started work. She should have met with them and told them that a young man would be taking the clerical job and that she expected him to be a good worker. By doing that, Ellen would have set the tone of the welcome Jerry received. Since Ellen ignored the potential problem, Carmen and Sandra felt justified in ignoring Jerry.

All young people feel isolated when they start a new job. This is especially the case when they have little experience and are working with older employees who are very experienced. They are in every sense the "new kid on the block." That is uncomfortable under any circumstances, but especially when a young worker is taking a job that is traditionally held by a member of the opposite sex. If as the supervisor you expect

a period of adjustment, you can prepare for it by making sure that other employees are supportive and by keeping an eye out for the kind of isolation that Jerry felt.

Ellen could try to work the problem out by giving Jerry some of the support he needs. The best way is to deal with the problem directly by saying, "Look, Carmen and Sandra are not used to working with a man in that job and so they are probably feeling a little uncomfortable too. It always takes time to get to know a person and I'm sure that once you get to know one another better they will be more friendly. Why don't we all get together and talk about the problems?"

Ellen should also talk to Carmen and Sandra privately to make sure that they give their co-worker at least simple courtesy. She should make clear that the kind of isolation Jerry has been subjected to will not be tolerated. Finally, she should encourage Carmen and Sandra to come to her when they have a problem with another worker so that she can try to resolve it before it gets to the point where someone is ready to quit.

Do You Agree?

1. **When sending a team of workers to a job site, a woman should be teamed with a man.**

   Yes No

2. **Male workers should be told to stop using profane language because a woman is present.**

   Yes No

3. **Women should be assigned to clean-up jobs because they are neater than men and will do a better job.**

   Yes No

4. **It's O.K. to call a woman "honey" on the job because most women enjoy it.**

   Yes No

5. **Men naturally have more mechanical skills than women.**

   Yes No

6. **Women have less mathematical aptitude than men, but have better verbal aptitude.**

   Yes No

7. **Women become emotionally involved more easily than men. They want to help everybody and get involved in their problems.**

   Yes No

8. **Men have more physical stamina then women, but less emotional depth.**

   Yes No

9. **Women become moody and there are times when they can't seem to cope with day-to-day stress.**

   Yes No

10. **Women should stick to women's jobs and shouldn't compete for men's jobs.**

    Yes No

Check Your Attitudes

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you believe some myths about women workers. Check the answers below to see how you might look at the question differently.

1. If you have a work site that requires a team, there is no reason that a woman should be paired with a man. If each woman is qualified to do the job and is competent in her work, she doesn't need a man to protect her or help her or guide her.
2. Using or listening to profane language is a matter of personal choice having nothing to do with the sex of the person. Many women swear or use profane language — and either a man or a woman may be offended by it. The decision to allow or disallow it should not be based on gender considerations.
3. If the work site requires cleaning up, then everyone should pitch in. Ideally, the task should be rotated among all workers. If this task is part of a particular job, that should be spelled out in the interview and during orientation.
4. Most women *do not* enjoy being called "honey" or other names of endearment. What is an affectionate gesture to you may be considered patronizing to a female worker. She may see it as a sort of pat on the head that says, "You're a good little girl." The goal should be to establish a work relationship with mutual respect. Address women the same way you address men.
5. Neither sex is born with either more or less mechanical skill. A skill is acquired by learning and practice.
6. Mathematical or verbal aptitudes don't come with pink or blue booties. However, our culture *labels* math skills masculine and verbal skills feminine. Because of this, as children get older this socialization sometimes takes over to make women *think* they don't have any mathematical ability.
7. Men also become emotionally involved. Men are also caring and nurturing and want to help people. In our society, these traits are more acceptable for women than for men. This is a stereotype that has no basis in fact.
8. Physical stamina is a matter of the health and conditioning of the body. Emotionally, strength is a matter of inner resources that are developed by an individual. Some men are emotionally stronger than some women; it is not a matter of gender.
9. *All people* become moody and there are times when they can't seem to cope with day-to-day stress. This does not apply only to women.
10. Job requirements are unrelated to gender. Tradition and custom rather than the tasks of the job have led to labeling certain jobs as "women's" and other as "men's."

Building Teamwork

The difference between success and failure in a small business may well hinge on whether or not you are able to create a team spirit among your employees. This means that each worker must realize that his or her job is important to the smooth running of the company. It also means that workers must learn to respect one another's work and cooperate in order to get the work done.

Teamwork is the ultimate solution to the temporary adjustment problems raised by a young man or woman working in a non-traditional job.

You can make your employees a team if you make sure that everyone knows that the first priority is getting the work done. If you treat every job as important, your employees will follow your example. They will understand that who does the work is not nearly so important as getting the work done well.

Teamwork is built on fairness: you must treat every worker equitably if they are to work together well. That means not "protecting" a woman by loading heavy work on a male co-worker. It also means not testing a woman by continually assigning her the most unpleasant tasks to see if she has the will to survive in the job. All anyone wants on a job is a fair chance to show that he or she can do it well: it is up to you to make sure that every worker gets the chance.

Harassment

If you find that a man on your work site refuses to accept a woman worker, or is hostile or abusive to her, it is your responsibility under the law to end that behavior immediately. Lay down the law to the offending worker: such behavior must not be tolerated. If you fail to deal with such a problem right away — and deal with it decisively — you could easily find yourself with many legal problems.

Sexual harassment is very common: the Working Women's Institute says seven out of ten women have complained of sexual harassment at least once. Other studies report rates of up to *ninety percent.*

If a woman employee complains to you of sexual harassment, take the complaint very seriously. Sexual harassment problems are reported infrequently and so when they do come to light, it is, unfortunately, usually because the problem is very severe. Talk privately with the woman and ask who, where, what happened, when, and how. Make notes of what the woman says. Repeat what she has said to you in your own words to make sure that you have understood everything correctly.

What is sexual harassment? A good definition has been developed by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Working Women's Institute. They say: sexual harassment is any unwanted verbal or physical sexual advance, sexually explicit derogatory statements, or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone at work, which are offensive to the recipient or which

cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation, or which interfere with the recipient's job performance.

It may include:

- **Verbal harassment or abuse.**
- **Subtle pressure for sexual activities.**
- **Unnecessary touching, patting, or pinching.**
- **Leering at a person's body.**
- **Constant brushing against a person's body.**
- **Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning one's job, performance evaluation, or promotion.**
- **Physical assaults.**

Sexual harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although the majority of incidents of sexual harassment involve a male supervisor or co-worker harassing a woman, the law also covers women harassing women, and men harassing men.

For a young woman just entering the work force — particularly if she is entering a non-traditional job — sexual harassment can be devastating. Young women don't have the inner resources to be able to cope with such advances because they are young and often intimidated by older workers. Unfortunately, because of their youth, young women and men are often the targets of harassment. Adults often believe young people will not report sexual advances because of embarrassment or fear.

Sexual harassment costs you money because it raises turnover and absenteeism and lowers morale and productivity.

After you have heard the complaint, meet in private with the person accused of harassment. Get his or her side of the story. Again, ask questions and rephrase statements to be sure you have understood.

Tell the worker that you will not tolerate this behavior. Explain that the woman deserves to be treated with the respect due any other worker on the staff. Make it clear to the person what he or she has done, and why it is unacceptable.

Recognize that sexual harassment may involve criminal violation of the law as well as violations of civil rights laws. Make the disciplinary action you take reflect the seriousness of the problem. The legal responsibility for stopping such behavior is finally yours.

Remember that the victim is not to blame when a sexual harassment incident takes place. She did not deserve it. She did not ask for it. She is entitled not to be approached sexually by a coworker. Sexual harassment is never justifiable.

The best cure for sexual harassment is prevention. Make a point to have a well publicized policy against it and discipline people who violate the policy immediately.

What would you want done if it happened to you?

Gender Harassment

Gender harassment is another form of abuse women suffer on the job. Gender abuse is harassment that occurs because a woman occupies a job usually held by a man. This kind of harassment involves threats of violence against a woman or her property. It includes such incidents as tire slashing, sabotaging a woman's safety equipment, and assigning a woman repeatedly or punitively to onerous work.

This kind of behavior is also prohibited by the civil rights laws and by some criminal statutes. As with sexual harass-

ment, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to maintain a work place which is free of such behavior. If you fail to deal with problems like these, you could be liable for legal action.

The best response is to make clear that you will not tolerate such behavior. Discipline offenders. Enforce the rules of your company: Presumably those rules include prohibitions against endangering the health or safety of other workers.

If a worker is hurt on the job from this kind of behavior, you are the one who will have to pay for the increase in Workers' Compensation premiums. Is it worth the expense in production time, insurance, and morale not to stop harassment?

The first response of some supervisors is to name the woman as the source of trouble and move her to another assignment away from the person who is doing the harassing. However, this approach does not deal with the basic cause of the problem: a male worker's attitude about dealing with a woman worker. Transferring the woman is punishing the victim of someone else's problem and in the long run is no solution at all.

These problems tend to disappear quickly if you deal with them right away and act decisively. Ignoring them only makes things worse. And when workers are concerned with showing one another who's boss, the biggest loss is productivity.

CASE STUDY

Play the Game

Millie Rodriguez's supervisor, Mike Osmond, was a real problem: He constantly asked her for dates. She kept telling him that she wasn't interested in going out with him, but Mike persisted.

One day when Millie and Mike were alone he pulled her to him, with his arm tightly around her. When Millie tried to pull away, he held her tighter. "Come on, Millie," he said, "Loosen up. I just want to be friendly. I want to take you out for dinner Friday night."

Millie tried to squirm free and said, "Look, I've told you before. I don't want to go out with you. Besides, I don't think it's a good idea for someone to go out with her supervisor."

"Nobody has to know," returned Mike. "I won't say anything at all."

"Forget it, Mike," Millie said sharply, "Leave me alone. I just don't want to."

"You might change your mind when I tell the boss that your work isn't any good. If you want to get ahead, you have to learn to play the game," he told her.

"I'll just tell him you have been putting the moves on me, Mike," Millie said.

"You think he'll believe that?" laughed Mike. "I've been here a lot longer than you, sweetheart. He won't believe a word you say if I tell him it isn't true."

Millie was frightened and couldn't think of what to do. She decided that the best way to fix the problem was to find another job — *fast*.

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

This is a pretty typical example of what happens when one employee harasses another sexually. Despite Millie's refusals, Mike continued to press her and to touch her without her consent. While his language was not overtly sexual, the message was unmistakeable. Soon his "friendliness" escalated into threats involving her job. No one should have to put up with "friends" like this at work.

These tactics are familiar to anyone who has suffered sexual harassment on the job. And they are clearly illegal. No one has the right to threaten, cajole, or pressure another worker for sexual favors.

Unfortunately, the outcome is also familiar, especially for young people who usually have trouble asserting themselves with adults in the best of situations. Mike thoroughly intimidated Millie so that her only thought was to get out. The real loser here was the company, which lost a valuable employee because she was too frightened to come forward.

The only solution for Millie is a strong company policy which prohibits sexual harassment and the knowledge that the boss will enforce it promptly and decisively. If Millie had had a policy to rely on and had known that her complaint would be taken seriously, she would have been far less vulnerable to Mike's threats. And the cable company would have protected itself from a potential lawsuit and kept a valuable employee.

- When someone begins work in a non-traditional job, people anticipate that there will be problems. This anticipation is often the real problem because it becomes a self-fullfilling prophecy. If you expect problems, you'll usually find them.
- Don't immediately dismiss the idea of hiring a young woman for a job that has usually been held by a man (or vice versa). If you do, you could be violating the law. In addition, you are cutting yourself off from a large pool of willing, capable, competent workers.
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against groups of people such as blacks, Jews, and women. This law applies to companies employing fifteen or more people. New York State law applies to businesses with five or more. The law clearly gives women the right to be considered for jobs on an equal basis with men.
- The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibit discrimination against women because of their sex by paying them lower wages than men receive for the same or nearly the same work in the same establishment.
- The difference between success or failure in a small business may well hinge on whether or not you are able to create a team spirit among your employees. You can create teamwork by pointing out that every job is important and that who does the work is not important.
- Sexual harassment can be any repeated or unwanted verbal or physical sexual advances, or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone in the work place, which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient or which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation or which interfere with the recipient's job performance. Take sexual harassment seriously. You are responsible for making sure it doesn't happen in your company.

Review

Check the correct answers.

1. Gender is a factor which can become set in an employer's mind as a job qualification.

   ☐ True ☐ False

2. In considering both men and women for jobs, you are enlarging the pool of potential employees from which to choose.

   ☐ True ☐ False

3. There are enough unemployed men in the nation to replace all of the country's employed women.

   ☐ True ☐ False

4. Historically, we know that women can perform "men's jobs."

   ☐ True ☐ False

5. Equal employment opportunity is the right of all people to work and to advance on the job on the basis of merit, ability, and potential, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

   ☐ True ☐ False

6. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 mandates that everyone who has the same responsibilities should be paid the same thing and everyone doing the same job must be paid on the same basis.

   ☐ True ☐ False

7. Sexual harassment on the job only affects a small percentage of women.

   ☐ True ☐ False

8. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against groups of people.

   ☐ True ☐ False

9. You can make your employees a team by :

   A. Assigning workers to work in pairs.

   B. Assigning a number of workers to perform certain tasks with another group competing against them.

   C. Making each worker realize that his or her job is important.

   D. Treating every worker fairly.

   E. Teaching workers to respect one another's work.

   F. Fostering cooperation among workers.

   G. Rotating jobs so that each worker knows what the other has to deal with.

10. The best way to prevent sexual harassment is to have a well publicized policy against it and discipline people who violate the policy immediately.

    ☐ True ☐ False

Review Analysis

1. True.	3. False.	5. True.	7. False.	9. C, D, E, and F.
2. True.	4. True.	6. True.	8. True.	10. True.

RESOURCES

If you want more information, you will find these books valuable.

Kenneth Blanchard, Ph.D., and Spencer Johnson, M.D. *The One Minute Manager* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1982)

A guide to increasing productivity and getting results from the people you manage.

Daniel Druckman, Richard M. Roxella, and James C. Baxter. *Nonverbal Communication: Survey, Theory and Research* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1982)

This book discusses the relationship between verbal and nonverbal behavior and the effects of cultural and personality differences on behavior.

William L. Siegel. *People Management for Small Business* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1978)

A guide on finding the right employee, planning a training program, communications, motivation, and evaluating employees. This is one of a series of books from this publisher geared to small business owners.

Thomas L. Moffatt. *Selection Interviewing for Managers* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1979)

An in-depth explanation of the interview and selection process from where to look for candidates through making a final decision.

John P. Wanons. *Organizational Entry: Recruitment, Selection, and Socialization of Newcomers* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1980)

A how-to-guide on matching the individual wth the job and the organization.

William H. Mobley. *Employee Turnover: Causes, Consequences, and Control* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1982)

This covers how to analyze employee turnover rates, determine the cause and the costs of turnover, and methods for reducing it.

Gordon F. Shea. *The New Employee: Developing a Productive Human Resource* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1981)

This covers task analysis, on-the-job training, and increasing productivity.

Paul Preston. *Employer's Guide to Hiring and Firing: Strategies, Tactics, Legal Considerations* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1982)

In addition to basic interviewing skills, this book deals with techniques on managing interpersonal conflicts, counseling the problem employee, and firing an employee.

The National Child Labor Committee is the nation's only private, non-profit organization which devotes a full program to the critical problem of youth employment. Run by business and voluntary leaders for more than eighty years, the Committee promotes education, training, and job opportunities for youth which are geared to the needs of the nation's businesses.

If you want more information about the Committee or its programs, write us at 1501 Broadway, New York, New York 10036.